THE PATIENT.

By W. R. ROSE.

The young man looked unusually determined. That is the way it struck the old man, who said: "Eh! Well, it's — it's — why, confound it, young man, do you realize what I've done for you?"

"I think I do, uncle. But when it comes to choosing a wife it seems to me that I ought to do a little something for myself."

"That's what you think, is it? Well, you have no right to think anything of the kind. I don't want you to marry until I can approve your choice. There's no hurry. Who is the girl?"

"Her name is Spencer. She has been a school teacher. She lives on Landor street."

"Any family?"

"One mother, sir."

Again the old man glared at him. "Poor?"

"From your point of view, yes, sir."

The old man drew his bushy gray eyebrows down. "Does she know you are entirely dependent on me?"

"I have told her of all your kindness, sir."

"And you have told her that I object to her?"

"I can't tell her that, uncle—at least, not until you have seen her."

The old man thumped his desk.

"By gravy," he cried, "I'll go and see her! I'll give her to understand just what the situation is."

"Very well, uncle. I've prepared her for your coming."

The old man scowled. "Give me her address," he snapped.

The young man picked up a half sheet of paper and wrote the desired information.

As soon as his nephew left the room he started for the street. It was a ten-minute walk to the proper car line. With arm upraised he signaled the motorman to stop. A heavy truck was approaching, and to avoid it the old man ran out in the street. As he did so a light motor vehicle whirled round the corner, struck him and he fell heavily and lay quite still.

He was carried into a drug store. The druggist saw a folded slip of paper projecting from the injured man's pocket.

"Looks as if it might be his address," he said.

The sufferer stirred a little and opened his eyes. "Don't take me to the hospital," he feebly murmured. "Take me home."

"Home it is," the ambulance man replied as he glanced at the slip of paper. A moment later he was speeding toward Landor street.

There was only the maid of all work at the cottage when they reached there. She was a new arrival and she stood helplessly when the ambulance crew carried the old man upstairs and placed him on the bed in the front room.

Half an hour later Mabel Spencer returned with her mother. The girl met her at the door.

"Da man is upstairs," she excitedly murmured.

"What man?"

"Da man who is seek. He iss with doctor. Two men bring him in black wagon. They look at paper. They say this iss the place. I get brandy. I get the doctor. See, he is coming."

The astonished woman looked toward the medical man, who was descending the stairs.

"Glad you've come," he said. "Your friend is resting easily just at present, but he needs constant attention. He's had a hard fall and a severe shock and at his age these things are always serious."

"But we don't understand, doctor," said Mabel, "who is the man and why is he here?"

"Eh!" He stared at her "Come upstairs," he said.

"I never saw him before," she whispered.

The doctor frowned. "Must have been brought here through some stupid mistake," he said. "Anyway, he can't be removed before to-morrow. I wouldn't answer for the consequences."

The girl removed her hat and jacket.

"Of course he stays," she said. "Tell me what to do."

That evening John Denton called at the usual time, and was a little surprised at the long white apron in which Mabel appeared.

"Why," he said, "you look like a nurse—and a very charming nurse at that."

"I am a nurse, John. Something very strange has happened. An old man was brought here in an ambulance this afternoon while mother and I were away. He had been hurt and was in a serious condition."

John Denton anxiously interrupted her. "Can I see him, Mabel?"

"Of course. He hasn't fully recovered consciousness, but the doctor thinks he will before long."

John Denton advanced to the bed. The heavy eyelids opened.

"Hello, John," said the feeble voice.

"Hello, uncle."

"Am I much hurt?"

"I think not, uncle. Rest and quiet will bring you round all right."

The gray eyes rolled about.

"I told them not to take me to a hospital. But I suppose there was nowhere else. It looks like a nice room. Is that the nurse there?"

Before John could reply Mabel was at the bedside.

"I am the nurse," she answered.

He studied her face.

"I like your looks, my dear. You'll take good care of the old man. Guess I'll sleep a little more," he drowsily murmured.

"This is very strange," John whispered. "He wasn't at dinner at the hotel to-night, but sometimes he stays away. Of course, I didn't dream he could be here. But I remember now that I gave him your address on a slip of paper—he said he would call on you—and it looks as if the ambulance men supposed it to be his home. And now what's to be done?"

"He will stay here, of course, until he is well."

"But the care and anxiety, Mabel."

"I think of what he has done for you, John. And he is your uncle. Don't worry, dear. We will get along all right. He thinks he's at a hospital."

John suddenly smiled.

"Perhaps that would be better. He is a little prejudiced against Mabel Spencer, you know."

A restless movement from the sleeper drew the girl quickly to the bedside. "Are you there, nurse?"

She put her cool hand on the old man's brow. "You have a nice voice and a soft hand," said the quivering voice. "Don't go away."

"I will stay right here."

The invalid steadily regained his strength. And then one day he had an alarming setback. It was an attack of heart failure. But when John reached the house the patient was sitting up smiling.

"Glad you came, John," he said. "The danger is over for the present, but it has set me to thinking pretty hard. Will you leave me with him for a minute, Mabel?" The girl smilingly nodded as she left the room. "Be within call, my dear," his feeble voice added. "Now, John."

"Yes, uncle."

"There's a little matter that's on my mind. I want it settled right away. I told you the other day that I didn't think you treated Mabel as she deserved. Since then I've noticed a change in your demeanor toward her. I'm glad of it. I want you to marry that girl, John."

"Marry her, uncle?"

"Why not? She's the very girl for you. And then she's too good a nurse to lose out of the family. What do you say?"

"What does she say?"

"I don't know. I think she feels friendly. I've done my best to put you in a favorable light. Call her in and we'll find out."

"Come here, Mabel, please," said the old man. "You know I've had a warning, and there's no telling when I'll get something worse." The girl came forward and stood by the bedside. "Mabel, my dear, what do you think of my nephew here?"

The girl's eyes opened wide. "I don't quite understand," she said.

"Do you think well enough of him to marry him?"

The girl flushed a little. Then she smiled down at the old man.

"Does he think well enough of me to ask me to marry him?"

"That isn't the question," said the old man. "But I'll ask him. Do you, John?"

"If you wish it, uncle."

"Confound you, that's not the way to answer. She's a great deal too good for you. Will you marry him if I ask you to, my dear?"

The girl smilingly nodded.

"Then that settles it. Take hold of hands. That's to bind the agreement."

John rolled his eyes toward the girl. "Wait, uncle. I want to tell you something." He pasued and suddenly laughed. "This is the girl, uncle."

"What girl?"

"The girl I told you about. Mabel Spencer. The girl you started to see when the motor car ran you down."

The old man stared at him.

"What's that? Why, you didn't say anything about her being a nurse. You—you said she was a school teacher."

"She's not a professional nurse, uncle."

"Eh? Isn't this a hospital?"

"No, uncle. This is Mabel's home."

He stared at them in silence. Then he scowled darkly.

"Well, bless you for a pair of grinning plotters!" he growled. "Aren't you ashamed to take such an underhanded advantage of a poor old man when he's down?"

And then he suddenly smiled.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Honesty is the best paid-up policy.

Natives Buried Alive by Consent

PECULIAR METHODS IN CHINA.

By BRUNO NOVARRA.

That the awful custom of burying people alive still prevails in Southern China is an old story with the foreign colony here, but the other day your correspondent and a handful of Europeans had the terrible truth brought home to them—saw the victim with their own eyes and rescued him, of course. We bought this human life for $100, paid to his parents, while the authorities agreed to see to it that the promises given were faithfully carried out.

The person whose life we bought for the paltry sum is the son of a poor artisan in a Shanghai suburb, not more than twenty miles from the foreigner's quarters. He is only fifteen years old, and for ten years has been a "terror," stealing, robbing and generally misbehaving himself. The parents came near limbering the life out of the youngster; the village elders gave him the bastonade time and again. He was placed in the pillory, was excluded from visiting his ancestors' temple; he wouldn't be good; it wasn't in him. Finally the father called a meeting and gravely announced that he had decided to bury his wayward son. All agreed that that seemed the only way to stop his badness.

Next day the father and twenty able bodied neighbors started out with the village elder at their head, all armed with spades and ramming blocks. In their midst walked the victim, arms and legs shackled. His three elder brothers held the ropes to prevent any attempt at flight. When the sorry procession arrived at the execution place they found it thronged with spectators. The whole village had turned out to witness the show—men, women and children. A branch of a tree was secured and the culprit's height, from the soles of his feet to his neck, was measured. At the same time the neighbors began to shovel the grave, a hole only deep and broad enough to take the body upright. When finished the lad was disrobed.

The victim offered no resistance, nor did he ask for mercy. He jumped down into the hole. His father and brothers each threw a few shovels of dirt after him; the neighbors did the rest, while the whole village helped trample down the earth and ram it with sticks and clubs. The ceremony lasted but five or six minutes; after that all that was visible of the bad boy were about six inches of neck and his head.

The same evening a pale Englishman named Graham burst into the British-American Club. "Boys, I nearly decapitated a Chinaman—must be one of those buried alive parties. The thing nearly frightened me to death, but having no tools to unbury the rogue, I drove here at breakneck speed for help. Come with me at once. My chauffeur is buying spades, axes and the like."

The buried alive opened his eyes wide when we set to work to rescue him. He had been quite resigned to his fate—to starve to death or being eaten by dogs or hogs. Besides, he told our interpreter, it was of little use. As his parents were determined to get rid of him, they would repeat the operation as soon as he was found. Hence we had to add bribery to our Samaritan act. One hundred dollars bought the boy a berth in a reformatory, whose president agreed to see to it that his parents and the village were no more bothered with the lad. When we related our adventure at the club, a Catholic missionary, visiting there, reported a number of similar cases that came under his own observation in the course of the last ten years or so. He said: "China punishes murder like most other countries—with death—death by quartering or crucifixion. But, at that, according to the current interpretation of the law, burying alive is not murder as long as the head of the victim protrudes from the grave or in case the victim consented to the act. Most of the person whom I know to have been buried alive were passionate gamblers, professional thieves, opium fiends or lepers—persons constituting a moral or physical detriment to their relatives and to the community."

The missionary told of the strange case of an opium fiend, the head of a family. Owing to his devotion to the drug this man refused to work and in order to get money to buy opium sold first his land, then his wife, then his sons. When but one child, a promising boy, was left the family council was called, and the relatives forbade the father to dispose of that child on pain of being buried alive. The opium eater promised, but next day went and sold the boy into slavery. The proceeds of this atrocity kept him in opium for a month. Then he got more by robbing his relatives and finally sank so low as to sell the copper roof from his ancestors' temple. That settled it, a man so depraved as to interfere with the family altars was unfit to live. The opium eater was so informed and he quite agreed with his dear relatives. Next morning four of his uncles and nephews invited him to go with them to a near-by forest, where a grave had been prepared. "Very well," he said, "give me two coppers' worth of opium." He took the drug just before he jumped into the grave, which was quickly filled with earth and stones. Before the relatives departed they asked the doomed man if he had any further wishes. "Yes," he replied, "cover my head and face with tall grass so the insects won't bother and the dogs won't disfigure me while alive."

In the same district, continued the narrator, lived a leper of seventy, who steadfastly refused to die. Though his children and grandchildren were tired of supporting him in the forest hut, where he lived by himself, he could neither be persuaded to commit suicide nor submit to burial. Finally the relatives appealed to the vanity of the old man. They went to town and bought the most up-to-date casket to be had—one highly lacquered and decorated with tinsel trimmings. They brought it to the old man's hut, promising him the beautiful "last coat" if he would wear it at once. The leper agreed with his children and grandchildren that the casket was a beauty, but though his life was miserable enough, he was not yet ready to shake it off. "I might consent," he said, "if you set up a fine funeral dinner."

The council of relatives called the old man a blackmailer. "Why," they argued, "you are going to die in a few weeks anyhow, and if you wait that long the lacquer on the casket may wear off, or it may be destroyed by fire or stolen. Of course, we would be very sorry to bury you right away, but since it must be done, sooner or later, excuse us for wishing to make an end of the matter." Arguments or no arguments, the living corpse insisted on his funeral dinner and got it. On the day following the agreement his relatives and friends assembled with a band of music, bags of rice, baskets of chickens, etc. At noon a grand dinner was spread and at its conclusion the leper laid down in his beautiful casket amid weeping and roar of cannon. The casket was lowered into the grave and covered with earth before the leper had time to rap to be let out again. The authorities knew about the arrangement, but said nothing. In similar manner, another leper was disposed of, only that in his case a fine mandarin's suit constituted the bait.

The sick man said he would be delighted to be buried in such noble garments. But when they came to fetch him he had changed his mind and absolutely refused to lie down in the casket.

"What," cried the grave diggers and other burial attendants, "have we had all this trouble for nothing?" And the relatives swore they would not pay them a second time, and upbraided the old man as a fool who didn't know his own mind.

"Unless you consent to be buried to-morrow morning, we shall take the mandarin's clothes away, also the casket, and warn you that no incense will be burned on your grave," said the eldest son and prospective head of the family.

"Well," said the old man, "if you promise to let me have the mandarin's suit and burn incense on my grave on the anniversary of my death as long as you live, and if, in addition, you will get me up a good meal to-morrow morning, plenty of chicken, rice and pork, then I will be buried."

The last breakfast was a big affair; not only the relatives, but the neighbors contributed to the feast. When all had their fill the funeral procession started. Behind the empty coffin hobbled on crutches the occupant-to-be. At a little distance, to prevent contamination, walked the son with the mandarin's clothes on his arm. At the open grave the doomed man donned the fine clothes, regarded himself long and earnestly in a mirror, drank a quantity of poison guaranteed to kill within half an hour, and hiccoughing and smiling, laid down in the coffin. The son nailed on the lid and the village elder attested "that all the formalities had been observed."—Illustrated Sunday Magazine.

Fatal Admission.

"What other qualifications have you for the place?" asked the merchant.

"Well," began the applicant, "my friends tell me I have a contented disposition, and——"

"You won't do," replied the merchant. "We want a man with a discontented disposition; one that will hustle." — Catholic Standard and Times.

The British empire has an area of 12,000,000 square miles, a coast line of 43,000 miles and a population of 440,000,000.

THE MERRY SIDE of LIFE

AN ARTIST.

The hotel cook was a doughty man,
He scoured each pot and he rattled each pan;
At his glance the scullions all turned pale,
And often he made a sparrow quail!
—Cleveland Leader.

HOW HE JUDGED.

Mrs. Cobwigger—"Don't you think you've had enough ice cream?"

Freddie—"No, ma; I don't feel sick yet."—Life.

AND HADN'T LOST IT.

Her Husband—"You were a good looking woman when I married you."

She—"Yes, I had the advantage of you, even then."—Brooklyn Life.

SURE ENOUGH.

"Bridget, I believe you're in love; you're so forgetful."

"Nonsense, ma'am. How could I be in love and me a married woman?"—Yonkers Statesman.

LIKELY AS NOT.

Patience—"I understand they are putting something in a piano, now, that kills the sound of the music."

Patrice—"Perhaps it's a phonograph."—Yonkers Statesman.

GONE.

Nell—"Yes, she said her husband married her for her beauty. What do you think of that?"

Belle—"Well, I think her husband must feel like a widower now."—Catholic Standard and Times.

AND THEN THEY KISSED.

"My face is my fortune, sir," said the pretty summer girl.

"And mine is, too," said the handsome summer man. "Let us put our fortunes together." — Lippincott's Magazine.

COURTEOUS CONSIDERATION.

"Do you ever talk back to your wife?" asked the solicitous friend.

"Sometimes," answered Mr. Meekton; "a very little; just to show her that I have not gone to sleep."—Chicago Daily News.

HIS EXPERIENCE.

He—"I'm willing to make concessions."

His Wife—"Really?"

He—"Yes, but it seems impossible to make the supply equal the demand."—Brooklyn Life.

A TRUE ARTIST.

"I think you have made my chin too prominent in this picture," said the lady.

"Well, I have tried to make a speaking likeness," replied the polite artist.—Yonkers Statesman.

AFTER A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

"I hear your son, Hank, wants to go to college?" said the constable to the farmer.

"Yas," replied the hayseed, resting on his hoe; "he wants to learn to play baseball, and he says he doesn't have time to learn on the farm."—Yonkers Statesman.

INJURED PASSENGERS.

Bacon—"I see the railroads of the United States, in the last eleven years, have killed 82,244 passengers and injured half a million more."

Egbert—"Wonder if that includes those injured by the 'ten-minutes-for-refreshments' restaurants?" — Yonkers Statesman.

THE PROPER LOCATION.

Hojax—"I haven't seen you for nearly a year. Where are you located now?"

Tomdix—"In New York City."

"What are you doing?"

"Trying to make an honest living."

"Well, you ought to succeed there. You have no opposition worth mentioning."—Chicago News.

HER MASTER'S VOICE

Elevator Boy—"Elevator going up."

Deaf Old Lady—"Which way is it going, bub?"

Elevator Boy (impatiently)—"Up! Up! Up! Up!"

Deaf Old Lady (indignantly)—"You talk to me, bub, as if you thought I was a trained dog!"—Lippincott's Magazine.

WILLING TO TRY IT.

"Well," demanded the stern-visaged woman at the back door, "what do you want?"

"Why," replied the tramp, "I seen you advertised 'table board' in dis mornin's paper——"

"Well?"

"Well, I t'ought mebbe yer wud like me some samples."—Catholic Standard and Times.